

Simple and Effective Marketing Research Methods

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How do you spend your
day?

Help me out here

- What is the most valuable service you provide?
- To whom?
- How do you provide it?

How many Ps are there in marketing?

- Product
- Place
- Price
- Promotion
- and . . .*
- Prowling

Where do you get information?

(Keep in mind you can scuttle my whole presentation right now if you know all the answers.)

How do you use it?

Typical Types of Research

- Surveys

- Phone
- On-line
- Mailers
- Kiosk

Everybody wants to do one. They are concrete, quantifiable, and tactile.

- Face-to-face

- Focus groups
- Interviews

They are the deceptively hard to construct and run. And the data is frequently difficult to manage.

These methods can be effective, but . .

- Participants know they are being studied which leads to speculation
 - some become suspicious and may not participate as a result
 - Some try to figure out the answer they think you want to give it to you
- You have to speak their language
 - Phrasing
 - Dress
 - etc., etc., etc.

And . . .

- Consider the costs
 - It's far more than thinking up a few questions – validity, reliability, bias, sampling, significance
 - There's printing (or calling), collating, postage (out and back)
 - Then – data entry and analysis
 - And finally, somebody has to write the report

unless . . .

You partner with someone else

- Local universities
 - Graduate research
 - Student assignments
 - Class projects
- Nonprofits
 - Those with “like” interests or causes
- Other departments on post
 - Those with “like” customers or complimentary products

Consider Alternatives to the Obvious

- Use available resources
- Systematic observation

Available Resources

- Read, read, read
 - go to the library
 - fire up the internet
- Mine existing data
 - Yours
 - Others
- Make the most of your trade association
 - Journals, reports, other professionals

More Available Resources

- Other sources of information
 - Comment cards
 - Requests
 - Blotter reports
 - Tallies
 - Purchase orders
 - Complaint records
 - RecTrac data (for example)
 - And, the lack thereof

Systematic Observation

- Jump in – involve yourself in your market
 - Go for a swim
 - Bowl
 - Tip one back (really, this is serious work)
 - Attend a meeting (incognito)

Can't always be on site? Then . . .

More Systematic Observation

- Use volunteers
 - To count
 - To report
- Employ technology
 - Traffic counters
 - Security cameras
 - Motion activated cameras

More Systematic Observation

- Don't forget to look outside the gates - Engage in stealth learning
 - In general, you are serving the same demographics (yours just tend to dress alike)
 - “The other side of the fence” frequently has done the research
 - They have money to spend on targeted promotions, so learn from them

If you still want to survey

- Work with your research office to develop short, “quick and dirty” instruments that can be administered and analyzed from post to post
- Buy a survey from a reputable source – your profession is full of folks who do this for a living

Caution, Caution, Caution

Poorly conducted research
results in the highest cost
imaginable –

bad information; which leads
to ineffective decisions.

Remember -

All research you conduct should be undertaken with the highest standard possible.

But . . .

Our customers are busy. There is valuable information that can only be gathered by asking questions. Respect your customer and the research process by gathering your data in the most unobtrusive way possible.